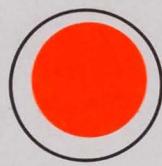


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# JOURNAL OF THE AIR FORCES

INDIA AND FAR EAST EDITION



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VOL. 2. NO. 14.  
25TH AUGUST  
1944.

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*This Is England, Dr. Goebbeles ! \*To  
The Beaches \*Hill Depots--What We  
Thought Of Them \*Last Chance In  
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\*Spitfires Over Burma \*The Way Back*

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FOLDER

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*Published Fortnightly*

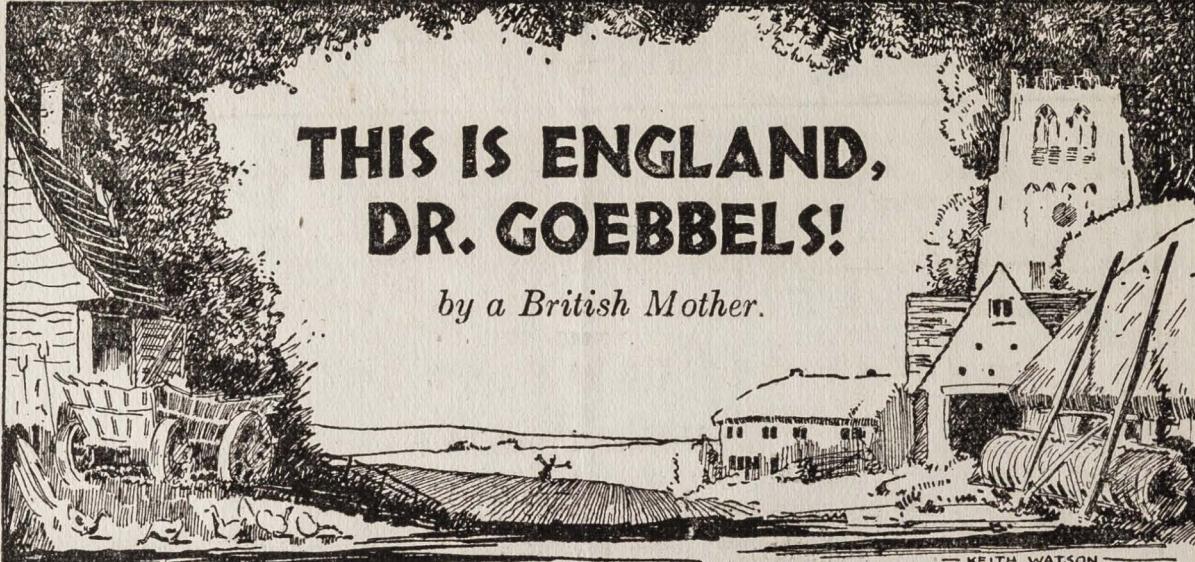
Volume 2 No. 14

25th. August, 1944.



**"DO ANNAS SUBCHEESE"**

During a lull in the fighting an R.A.F. Corporal does a 'spot of bargaining' in the Imphal Bazaar.



# THIS IS ENGLAND, DR. GOEBBELS!

by a British Mother.

KEITH WATSON

I spent this weekend in Southern England—the England hidden, according to Goebbels, under a pall of smoke. I dined with friends and journeyed between my home and my son's school, across this lovely countryside, victimised by flying-bombs.

When I returned, I made these notes, out of my pride in my countrymen and women, and for my own pleasure. Now I offer them to you for yours.

**R**ECOLLECTIONS... Of dining in a Southern English garden under sweeping acacia trees, me wearing a flowered white hat—narcissi, jonquils and a froth of veiling—as a feminine challenge to flying bombs.

Of a conversation that skimmed gaily, delicately over centuries of English history... that touched upon the Government's plans for developing England as a more gracious land... that remembered the England of the 18th century when the great Whig houses, pillared and proud, flowered from strong roots in the virile English earth. Of the fitful interruptions of Germany's blind creatures, meteor-tailed that flew swiftly overhead to dip and kill...

\* \* \*

Of pausing and watching a moment... and, then returning to 150 years ago and 150 years hence... so sure of the solidarity of English people that there was no need to dwell on the present...

Of drinking coffee in a charming, untidy, elegant room, full of Baroque bric-a-brac, rich with that casual effortless friendliness which is the English genius...

Of the Venetian glass chandelier—a lovely thing of light and colour—quivering every time one of the blind, blundering creatures came violently to earth.

Of an abrupt night, dozing with sudden awakenings... of looking out through my bedroom window at these strange, hell-made stars, remembering lines written by Celia Dale...

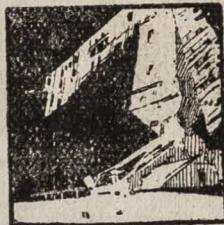


*I shot a star into the sky,  
It fell to earth, that man might die*

Of a tremendous rushing crash... of my breath suddenly being plucked out of my body by an unseen power... of a moment when it seemed it would not be given back to me again... strange and rather horrible and very interesting...

Of my cross-country journey in the morning sitting opposite a young Naval Lieutenant—a good looking boy unmistakably of the sea—who asked eagerly : "I say, what are these flying bombs like ? Got my leave just in time to see them."

Of the loveliness of the English countryside as we passed... green-laden trees, swaying gently in the breeze... white-dressed cricketers on every village green... mothers pushing babies in sun-canopy prams down the high streets, absorbed in shopping, looking for strawberries or cherries, forgetting what might go overhead.



Of my son's school, a mellow red-bricked house covered with wistaria, terraced to the sun... children climbing trees, swarming over the lawns... of bedroom windows broken by blast, of rows of mattresses airing in the sunlight ready to be put back in the blastproof shelter at night.

Of the fair in the village to which I took three eager boys, each clutching two shillings... of walking with them by the side of the tall green wheatfield... of their proud recognition of patrolling fighters overhead.

Of our first sight of the fairground, glinting in scarlet and white stripes through the green trees, of swirling merry-go-rounds and swings and noisy gay hurdy-gurdies... of shouting bouncing happy children... of ginger-pop and cakes... of my young son saying : "We damp matches and light them, and send them through the air—like this, so that they look like flying bombs."

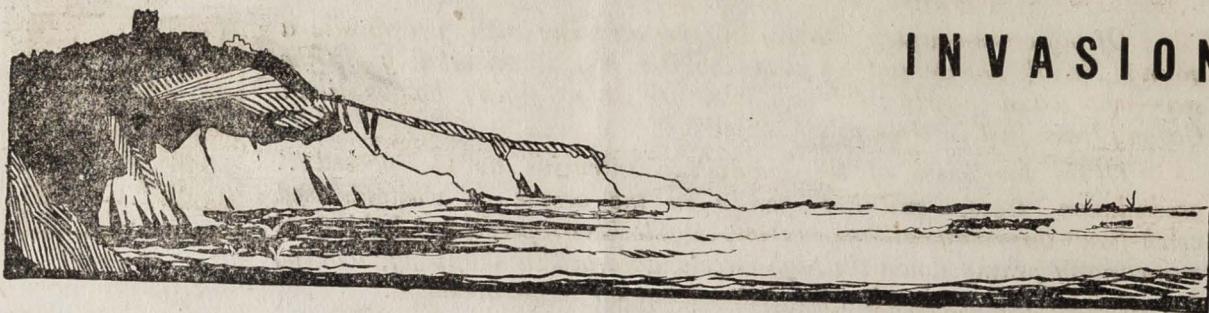
Of my return journey with a big bunch of flowers... of the gallant who saw me searching for string with which to tie them together... who immediately gave me the string that held the identity discs around his neck, saying : "I think I won't need it just now. One of those flying bombs fell within fifty yards of me yesterday—and well—here I am still."

Of my thrice-weekly help whose name is Mary Stuart, arriving today and saying, crossly: "Sneaking murdering things... but they can't win a war that way. We showed them once before, and we'll show them again."

This is Southern England, Dr. Goebbels—not heavy with smoke, but brilliant with sunlight and the spirit of its people.



# INVASION



I joined the Servicing Commandos unit at the Transit Camp. It was one of those days typical of the first week of the invasion: a cold wind blew about the high and almost treeless plain. Clouds which seemed to be full of rain crowded sulkily in the sky. Occasionally, though, they would disperse and you would get an hour or two of hot sunshine.

The whole countryside appeared to be dotted with these Transit Camps. Each consisted of half a dozen or so marquees in the middle of a field, in which were housed the Orderly Room, Cookhouse, Mess tents, Cinema, N.A.A.F.I., Stores, etc. Surrounding these were flocks of ridge tents in which the men of the various units lived.

Some of these units have been in the camp four or five days: others arrived yesterday. The camp is "sealed off" so there is practically nothing to do but eat and sleep, read and write letters, yarn with your friends, or improvise a game of football and listen to the Tannoy.

The C.O. comes into the tent and makes me welcome. I ask him what exactly the Servicing Commandos are,

and he gives me a brief outline.

"There are several Servicing Commando units. In this country we were formed just over a year ago for the specific job of manning the advanced landing strips so that our aircraft can operate from bases right up by the front line. We don't build these landing strips: that's the job of the Royal Engineers. Our job is to refuel

and rearm the aircraft, to bomb them up, and to carry out minor repairs. We are a stop-gap, holding the landing strip until the squadrons' own ground personnel arrive. By the time they do arrive there will

be some other advanced strip ready farther ahead, and we shall move to that. We have far less men than a regular airfield staff, who have about four times as many men to do the same work. Among the officers here is myself, the Adj. here, and Dave, the other engineer officer. I'll introduce you to Dave and he'll give you the rest of the gen."

Dave was in his tent, which I was to share with him. He was about 25 or 26 years old, of medium height, strongly built, a man of tremendous energy and concentration.



## TO THE BEACHES

Here is a story written for the Journal by Flight Lieutenant Frank Tilsley of his invasion experiences with a Unit of the Servicing Commandos.

## SECTION



DAVE told me that apart from the fact that almost all the men are volunteers they are also nearly all Group 1 tradesmen. Not only are they experts in their own jobs but they also learn to do a variety of other jobs almost as well as they can do their own. They have been trained on a wide variety of machines—Typhoons, Hurricanes, Lightnings, Spitfires, Thunderbolts, Marauders, Beaufighters and Mosquitos are some examples.

Their training has been intensely practical. Apart from theory, and physical toughening up, and combat weapon training, they have accustomed themselves to meeting sudden urgent demands for technical assistance on airfields up and down the country. They have been rushed to these airfields at a moment's notice, not knowing in advance whether they were going to stay for hours, for days, or for weeks, or what sort of a job they had to tackle.

The whole unit is completely mobile and self-contained with its own medical service, field kitchens, stores, and everything else to make it independent on the field. The lorries are fitted out as workshops—one of them is fitted out as an orderly room, with tables that are really steady and which fold up into the side of the lorry for when the vehicle is taken on to the road.

As we talked the Tannoy broke out again. We stopped in mid-sentence. Beyond the tent a game of football

was in progress. One of the men trapped the ball: then everybody stood listening, stiff and silent.

"This is Camp X. Attention all ranks. No. (Blank) Servicing Commandos are to parade outside the N.A.A.F.I. at 1800 hours. Parade outside the N.A.A.F.I. at 1800 hours. That is all."

"Well," I say, getting up: "That's us."

We said good-bye and I went off for tea (which is also dinner—the last meal of the day). I wanted to have this meal right away so that I could get to know some of the boys before the six o'clock parade.

IT is very difficult to generalise about these Servicing Commandos. They are a very mixed bag, of all sorts and conditions, of all shapes and sizes. They must be constitutionally strong, because an illness of more than one day's duration results in a posting, unless the circumstances are exceptional. "The only thing they have in common," says Dave, "is that they are keen on their job and will work until they drop. With every one of them the job comes first: everything else takes second place."



A high proportion of these fellows are regular airmen: almost all the senior N.C.O.'s are regulars. The rest of them come from almost every civvie job



you could imagine: garage hands, mechanics, clerks, shop assistants—all the usual things.

I must confess that they don't parade like the R.A.F. Regiment when, at 1800 hours, we arrive at the site behind the N.A.A.F.I. But they do parade eagerly and it is obvious that they cannot start on the road too soon.

When the C.O. arrives they form in a square, so that everybody can hear what he says. He tells them that they have been allocated a landing strip. This has been pointed out to him on a map. At the moment the front line runs through the site: it is hoped the enemy will have been cleared off it by tomorrow, and that the Engineers will be able to get to work with their bulldozers and level it and lay down the steel mesh runways. We strike camp tomorrow, at nine o'clock. . . .

You sleep soundly, with a confused impression of rain beating on the canvas of your tent, and one or two sirens which may be alerts or all clears: then you wake to a cold and surly morning pouring with rain which, in occasional weak moments, dwindles to a thick drizzle.

Breakfast cheers us up, however: there is plenty of sugar for the porridge and for two or three hot cups of tea; fried white bread and an amiable streak of bacon. We go back to our tents, pack up our kit, and at nine o'clock we are on parade. Then we march off to our lorries, drawn up on

the hard-standing ground, beside lines of gliders. We march through the driving rain, whistling and singing, and clattering with our assortment of arms, rifles and revolvers, Tommy guns and Commando knives, kit bags, mess tins and so on. The rain is thinning out as we board the lorries, and by the time we draw away to the rendezvous the sun has appeared in the sky, full of promise for a hot day.

I sit in the cabin of a three ton Bedford. With the other units moving at this time from our particular transit camp we make quite a long convoy—over fifty vehicles. A halt is called about eleven o'clock. We climb down from the trucks and sprawl along the wayside of a high green table-land. We eat sandwiches, and are then ordered to burn all our maps. Then we move off again, through more country roads and villages, with people who wave occasionally. We are now sufficiently near the Reception Centre, and the Port, for people to know that we are on our way over the water, so there are plenty of smiles, and thumbs up and V-signs, which we return. A white haired old lady in a bedroom window catches my eye: she smiles and crosses her fingers and I feel suddenly and deeply moved. I have never seen her before and will never see her again, and she will never know how I made out—how any of us made out—but I feel it was lucky, catching her eye in that way.

We reach the Reception Centre at about three o'clock. What a sight it is! A canvas city spread under the trees, a vast city through which we can move only slowly, along the winding roads, following the signs. Rows and rows of tents, wedges of transport, hedges of camouflaged lorries, troops of all sorts and nationalities—Americans,

British, R.A.F., black troops : more men than I imagined all the armies of the world could assemble. And only a fraction, apparently, of the invading army, for nobody stays here more than 24 hours, we are told, and mostly units are away the same day.

We have tea, in a marquee under the tall trees—a very good meal, too. The C.O. is called for briefing, so perhaps we shall be away tonight after all. We go back to the tent and talk. An R.A.F. Regiment officer has been attached to the unit to organize the defence of the A.L.G., and we talk about the fighting qualities of the Servicing Commandos.

The Commando officers stress the fact that their job is not to fight but to service aircraft. They have all done a combined operations course and have had special weapon training and been toughened up by 30 mile route marches.

"We've had bridges blown up under our feet and crawled for days through fields and hedge, glens and dales," says one of them. "We've practised loading on tank craft and disembarked in the middle of the night with thunder flashes bursting all around us. We've fought for long periods without food and worked like blacks also without food—just to get us in trim. But even so we aren't likely to do any serious fighting unless there are sudden breaks through by the enemy, or we are faced with recce patrols by the enemy. Snipers we do expect. In any case, whatever happens, we've been well trained and we've got the weapons, so its up to us to put up a good show."

The C.O. comes into the tent.

"We move off tonight," he says, "at half past eight. . . ."

THIS time I ride in the jeep. We are at the head of our particular column, but as we move into the port there are so many columns that we simply merge into long lines of traffic, crawling slowly along, stopping, moving on again, but all going in the same direction through the gathering darkness: down to the quay. We learn that we are to embark on an L. S. T.—a tank landing ship. These are the big ships with the shallow draught and the big ramp doors, so we are rather pleased. It is going to be a more comfortable trip than we had feared.

At last, about three o'clock, we are on the hards. Two L. S. T's are before us, monstrous in the dark, the lights on their tank deck making brilliant squares in the darkness. What could Jerry do now if only he had the bombers! The jeeps go down first. It is a steep and jolting run down, and an even steeper and more jolting run up into the vessel.

The jeeps, and some of the lorries, drive right up on to the top deck. Then the remainder drive on to the tank deck. As we park our vehicles in the correct places we sigh with relief and search for blankets to wrap round us: perhaps now we can get some sleep.

"Well," says somebody in the next vehicle. "We're aboard at last. I've been waiting for this for four years." There is a mumbled reply, and I fall asleep with my head on somebody's tin hat.

WE move out to the estuary, and drop anchor. We shall have to wait several hours for the tide, we are told.



I am beginning to realise the true sense of the word in which these

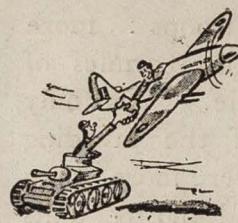
Servicing Commandos are tough. A night without sleep has had no effect on them. They eat a hearty breakfast, standing in groups about the top deck, some of them in their shirts, some of them naked from the waist up, although the sun has gone now and personally I am still very cold though wearing a slipover under my battle-dress, and a raincoat.

We wait many long hours in the roadsteads, first for the tide, then for our position in a convoy. At last we move off. We crowd to the rails of the ship and silently watch the shores of England creep away from us. The sun is strong now, but cold. The sea is green and somehow magnificent. Very shortly, we join up with more lines of ships until within the hour we are part of a convoy of big ships which reach from horizon to horizon. Destroyers, corvettes, and even a couple of cruisers move about our lines. I am aware that a faint sense of tension has left my mind. I feel very safe. I sit in the jeep, reading and looking out over the vast green waters, and I doze off to sleep.

The look-out has just shouted "land-ho!" and there it is, the coast of Normandy, a faint dark line miles ahead of us. There is a sense rather of satisfaction than of excitement. We seem to have been on this ship a very long time.

Half an hour passes in silent contemplation of the shore; another half hour. We can see the shipping, lying outside the beaches, stretching endlessly, for miles and miles, so that you seem to be looking at a vast industrial town outspread with smoking factories, cranes, derricks, etc.

We are silent with wonder at this



great spread of shipping. We expected to see many ships, but nothing like this. It is as though all the ships in the world have been gathered together in one place, as though a World Shipping Convention has been called.

**W**E are quite close to the shore now: two or three miles. A sandy beach rises to low green head land. There are sandy scars where bombs and shells have fallen, patches of woodland from which rises what appears to be brown smoke. We think this is shelling: tomorrow we shall discover that it comes from an airstrip, that all Normandy is clouded with brown dust which gets into your hair and teeth, into your eyes and ears.

We are in position at eleven o'clock, grounded on the beach, but we have to wait a couple of hours for the tide to recede sufficiently to be negotiated by the vehicles. We are given another meal at twelve o'clock, and the Americans make a present to us of cigarettes and tobacco and matches. Their generosity and friendliness kindles inside us the liveliest regards.

After lunch we man our vehicles. I go down with a few other chaps to the ramp doors. The ship next to us has grounded fifty feet further in, and the vehicles are already pouring on to the beach. The wind blows freshly into the ramp doors of the ship; the mid-day sun glimmers on the blue water. Spitfires patrol above us. Convoys of vehicles are creeping up the sand to the dusty road ahead. There is the occasional bang of a gun or an exploding mine. Otherwise everything is as peaceful as you could possibly wish.

All the vehicles are out of the next L. S. T. and we have not yet begun. A long ragged line of German prisoners suddenly appear, moving towards the ship : they are going to England.

But all this is forgotten as the order comes to disembark. We rush back to our lorries and away we go. My own vehicle is one of the last, but it is still a steep drop into three or four feet of water. We go in with a splash, and then we are ploughing through the water.

Now we are up on the sand, taking our place in the convoy. The driver turns to me.

"So this is France," he says.

\* \* \*

**A**s we drive towards the reporting centre we are all eyes. The country is rather like Kent : smiling fields with pleasant hedges, little houses and bungalows, slightly different from our own. The villages are largely built of stone, and the walls are of stone and very high, sometimes you come across imposing iron gates.

We pass some battered concrete which looks as though it was once part of a fortification system. Along the orchards and cornfields are wooden notices : "Achtung ! Minen !" The dust is rising everywhere from the inadequate roads, which our heavy vehicles are grinding down into powder. Pioneers are already trying to widen them.

Everything seems very confused, but in fact we are at the Report Centre less than an hour. A corporal here tells me that snipers are their main trouble, and the flak from the nightly barrage — "sleep in ditches," he says "or dig slit trenches." I look in some of the tents and see that the occupants have dug a deep pit inside. They

sleep down here, covering the opening as well as they can with branches of trees loaded with their kit and anything else they can get hold of. The units here have had small losses, perhaps one or two on landing, one or two with mines and snipers.

We remove the waterproofing from our vehicles and take to the road again. It is a slow and dusty process, with long hold-ups, particularly in the villages. Some of the villagers wave, most of them take no notice of us : some just stare at us, silently. You can't expect much enthusiasm, I suppose, when we

## QUIZ

1. What is the meaning of "Barra-cuda", the name of one of our new aircraft?
2. What is the Royal Maundy, or Maundy money?
3. How many men does the human torpedo carry?
4. The phrase "Portal's priorities" was used in a House of Lords debate. What was being discussed?
5. What do the letters I.L.O. stand for?
6. Who succeeded Major-General Wingate in command of the special force operating inside Burma?
7. Who wrote (a) Mein Kampf ; (b) Das Kapital ; (c) War and Peace ?
8. Where and what is (a) the Alhambra ; (b) the Parthenon ; (c) The Taj Mahal ?
9. In what country did the following events occur : (a) the Boxer Rebellion ; (b) Battle of Waterloo ; (c) Charge of the Light Brigade ?
10. How many separate States are there in America ?
11. What and where is the capital city of the U. S. A. ?
12. Has the American President greater powers than the British Prime Minister ?
13. Who were the original inhabitants, the true Americans ?
14. Who were the first settlers in America ?

(Answers on page 27)

have wrecked their villages and fields. After all they didn't know what war was until we began it a few days ago. They look reasonably well fed: the children look very well fed and lively and happy. The men all seem to wear blue overalls, with patches of a deeper blue.

There is no sound of guns at all, now, though a mine exploded in the next field, at our last stop. The sun is warm and gracious. We pass wheatfields filled with poppies, so that you get an effect of lovely red shot silk. All the time the planes fly over us, Spitfires and Mustangs, Typhoons and Thunderbolts. They make us feel very safe, but tomorrow we shall find that German fighters sneak in just the same and give us a few unexpected bursts of fire.

The fields are full of anti-invasion posts.

\* \* \*

**W**E reach our airstrip and find it still under construction. The fighting round here has been fluid, one of the men tells me. A couple of days ago the Germans were about four miles away. Then they came back again. This morning the nearest patrols were in "that wood, over there", but there's been fighting this morning, and now, by the sound of the guns, he says, they must have been pushed back about three or four miles.

We stand about for an hour or so, watching the bulldozers ripping away and levelling the dusty soil. Wire mesh strips are laid down and fastened. A Dispatch Rider comes along and tells us to follow him, and off we go again.

We are taken to a field about a mile from the airfield. This is to be our camp. We disperse the lorries round the hedges and cover them with cam-

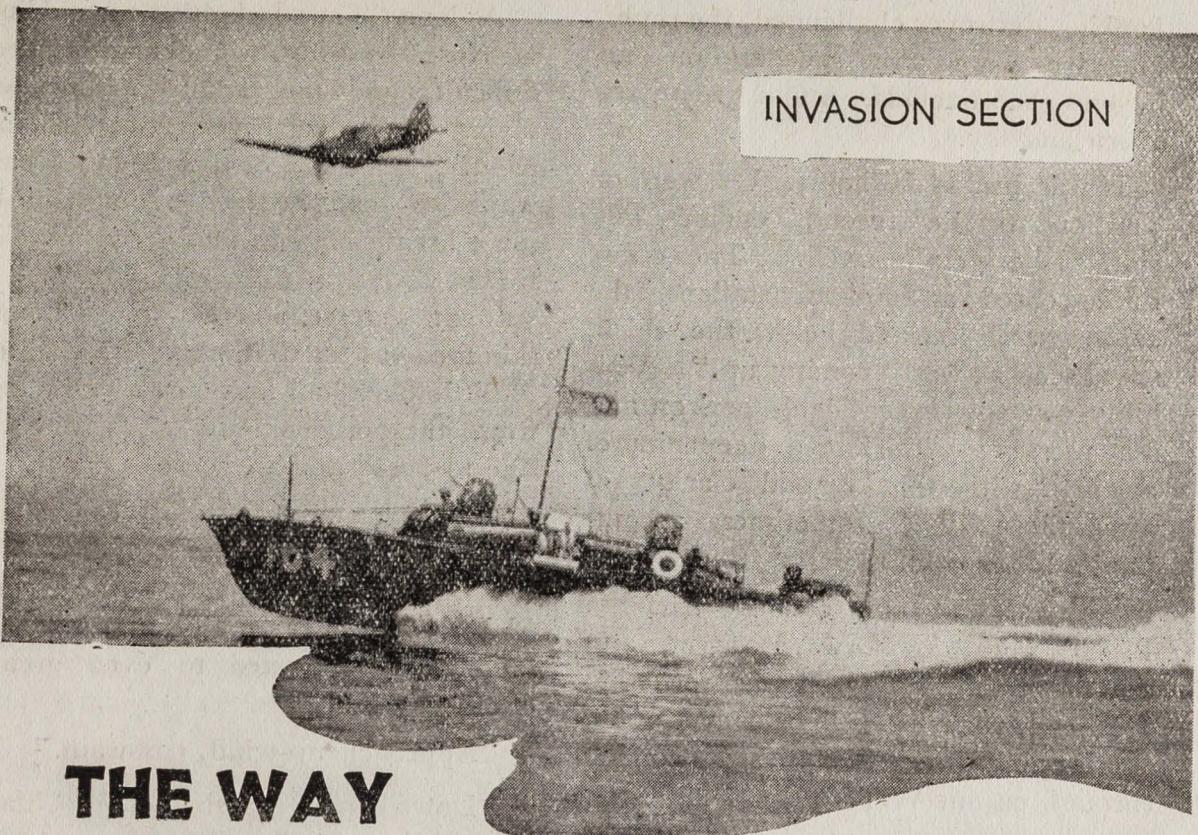
ouflage nets. We erect the tents, sort out our kit, make ourselves at home and then, at long last, open our ration packs and scrape together some sort of evening meal. It is nearly dark by now, and we have it inside the tent in the light of a hurricane lamp.

We have just tumbled into bed when Jerry comes over. There is a battery of 3·7's about two fields away which takes a distinctive part in the subsequent barrage. Twice we hear the whine and explosion of bombs. They sound as though they have dropped somewhere near the airstrip. The tent shakes with the racket, and we go outside. Pieces of shrapnel fly gaily about (passing through at least one of the tents). The fleet is doing its stuff too: we can hear their big guns in the distance. There are great cones of searchlights.

We are so tired that we go back to bed. I lie on my back, put my tin helmet on my face, and recall the advice about sleeping in ditches and slit trenches. Then I go to sleep. I am wakened by the patrol, reporting to the C.O.'s tent (which is next to mine) that they have spotted two men coming down by parachute. I feel that I ought to be alarmed by this but before I can do anything about it I have fallen asleep again.

\* \* \*

**J**UST after dawn I am wakened by a dispatch rider who wants to know whether I am the C. O. I tell him the C. O. is in the next tent and sleepily listen to what goes on there. The Commandos have been called to action at the next airstrip to do a rush job. They are roused, on their lorries, and away into action, in a matter of minutes. Then I fall asleep again.



INVASION SECTION

## THE WAY BACK . . .

by Corporal G. Thomson.

ON an Air-Sea Rescue Base on the South Coast, morning routine was already in full swing. A stiff March breeze was whipping up-river, setting masthead pennants a-ripple on the trim little hulls rocking to the swell beside the jetty. Aboard, crews were busily engaged, swilling rime from drab painted decks, adjusting lines, fenders and cleaning already immaculate perspex.

A short hour's wait, and then came the news that we were going on rendezvous, starting immediately. In a moment or two the skipper was hurrying from the office, the precious code-cypher books tucked under his arm and the last minute gen.

A quiet, unhurried order was given as lines were cast off and fenders taken in. We were under way, nosing out of

the harbour, our recognition bunting streaming from taut halliards. Once in open water the smooth engine purr swelled to a roar, sending a torrent of wash slashing against the piles of the jetties.

"Course 091 Coxswain."

"O-nine-one it is, sir."

With familiar buoys rocking in our wake, we were on course, past trawlers and tankers wallowing along the coastal sea lanes. A flick of Aldis as the lean

Behind the invasion scene, waiting in countless harbours along the South Coast of Britain, lie the "St. Bernards" of the air arm—the little A.S.R. launches. This is the tale of one of many similar incidents in which they figured during the early invasion days.

flanking destroyer challenged, the reply, and we were past, speeding on and beyond the minefields, into a grey vista of sea and sky.

It was just 14.00 hours. We were on position to the second, engines cut, riding the gentle swell. The crew, duffle-coated at look-out stations, the radio watch set and below the thick, naval cocoa was "coming up." Visibility was now exceptional, horizon and sea merging with but a deepening of colour, with that crystal clarity of atmosphere that sometimes accompanies bitter cold.

"Aircraft at one o'clock, friendly, P.47s" from the forward turret, and the first fighter squadron was rocketing overhead, their inter-flight conversation, overlapping and confused coming through on our W/T.

A murmurous whisper, so distant, so indistinct that straining ears could scarcely hear it, increased gradually into a deep unmistakable drone.

The first Fortress Squadron was returning, flying high and due west, tiny indistinct blurs in a stratosphere setting, with faint wispy lines marking their passage against a backcloth of clear and cloudless blue.

These compact formations, ploughing with even, distant hum six miles up were no concern of ours; the "lame ducks" limping a lonely route homeward were what we were watching for.

As the woolly vapour trails dissipated the laggards began to appear. A late formation, slower, yet still symmetrical, then in pairs and singly, till one lumbering giant passed two cables to port at 2,000 feet, with buckled stabiliser, a feathered propeller and "flak"-torn wings. But his radio signals were reassuring; he'd make emergency base anyway.

A lone "Thunderbolt" was circling; so close his prop.-whine made speech difficult, and the radio operator was saying with deceptive calm: "Calling us, sir, B24 short of fuel 20 miles east, wants to lead us in." Almost in the same breath engines thundered into life raging from a deep initial roar to a strident crescendo as the launch skimmed after that gnat-like fighter. A little over half an hour, a yell came from the port look-out "she's ditched, fine to port" and we were in sight.

A black tail fin heaved lazily, dwarfed in a grey expanse of sea as the bomber settled. We saw the yellow blob of a rubber dinghy, and straining engines were coaxed to even greater effort.

"Approach up-wind, coxswain."

"Down port crash net." "Stand by with heaving-line." "Cut engines."

We were alongside, dinghy firmly secured, and willing, eager hands were helping the eight survivors aboard, incredibly heavy in sodden flying kit. We led them into the sick bay, where they were stripped, circulation restored to numbed limbs and helped into the welcome warmth of the bunks.

Meanwhile Doc, calm, methodical, was examining each man carefully and taking particulars of individual injury. The skipper, directing generally, wrote down unit details and names for his radio report. Fifteen minutes of smooth teamwork, the job was done, and the air crew, towelled and in their warm blankets were sipping piping-hot tea well laced with brandy, smoking Player's and "cracking" in their crisp, transatlantic idiom. Then with their dinghy deflated, and stowed aft, the debris-dotted area thoroughly searched, we were recalled, and set course for home.

# FAMILY ALLOWANCES

We have been asked by the Director General of Personal Services to publish the following information.

IT is an established principle in the three Fighting Services that a man who wishes to claim family allowance must make a qualifying allotment from his pay. Prior to 4th May, 1944,

Of that sharp-eyed fighter we saw nothing again. The job done, a drawled question or two over R/T, dip of wings in laconic salute, and he was gone.

By 17.50 we made base. The usually deserted quay was a hive of activity, with the familiar faces of the duty-crew expectant and a little curious, the re-fueller standing by, and the ambulance ready to whisk our "passengers" off to hospital.

While below, Doc had dressed them in a miscellany of garments from the crash-kit, with emphasis on warmth rather than fit, and thus they were handed over to the white-coated ambulance orderly, smiling a little at each other in their sweaters and scarves.

A cheerio to us (as we kidded them about survivor's leave), a handshake with the skipper, and they were gone.

The curious crowd at the dock gates thinned, then slowly dispersed. The crew were already preparing for sea again, to the low purr of the re-fueller, pumping the fuel into the bowels of their launch.

There was more than that pile of fluorescein-stained flying kit to mark the passing of a combat crew from peril to safety. There was our own feeling of satisfaction.

Whenever aircraft flew, night or day, storm or fine, in home or enemy waters, we would be keeping watchful vigil.

it was not essential that the rates of qualifying allotment should be the same in the three Services. In fact, at some points the R. A. F. scale of qualifying allotment was substantially lower than the scales of the other Services. For instance, whereas a soldier whose pay was 5s. 6d. a day paid a qualifying allotment of 1s. 6d. a day, the qualifying allotment for an airman on the same rate of pay was only 1s. 0d. a day; the result was that, while the *total* receipts of the soldier and his wife were the same as the *total* receipts of the airman and his wife, the soldier's wife received a larger share of the total than the airman's wife did.

The arrangements introduced as from 4th May, 1944, involve a change in that they fix an overriding minimum of 35/- (plus 12s. 6d. for each child) as the total weekly allowance payable to wives (with children) of men on the lower ranges of pay. The Air Ministry could not reasonably claim that the State should make a higher contribution towards the making up of this minimum for the wives of airmen than it does for the wives of sailors or soldiers on similar rates of pay. It was necessary, therefore, to bring the qualifying allotments of the airmen broadly up to the level of those of the sailors and soldiers.

The increase in the R. A. F. rates of qualifying allotment affects airmen on pay ranging from 4s. 9d. to 8s. 0d. a day and the greatest increase is one of 6d. a day. This increased contribution by the airman is accompanied by an increase in total receipts by the airman and his wife varying from 3s. 0d. to 13s. 0d. a week for airmen with one child, 7s. 0d. to 17s. 0d. a week for airmen with two children, and 12s. 0d. to 22s. 0d. a week for airmen with three children, the amount of the increase diminishing as the airman's pay increases.

(Continued on page 19)

# HILL DEPOTS

## WHAT WE THOUGHT OF THEM

In May (Journal No. 6) we published details of plans for leave at Hill Depots this year and we asked those who went to them to let us know their experiences. Here are two of the stories we received.



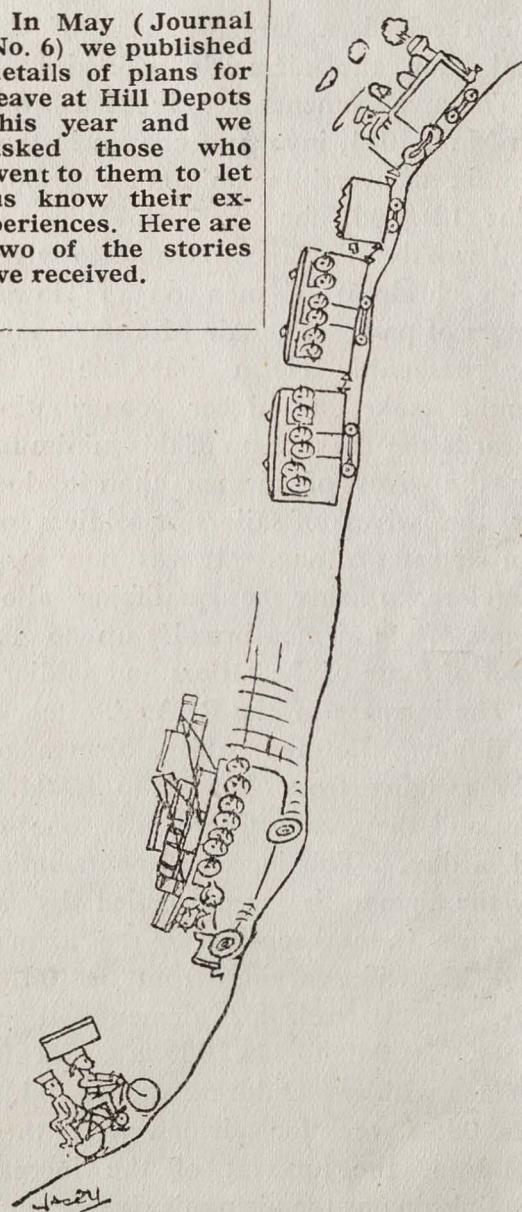
BY AN OFFICER

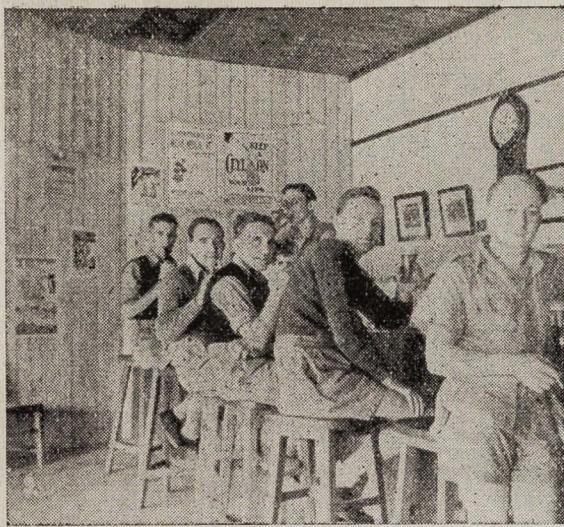
IN a valley to the west of Nuwara Eliya, reputed "Queen of Ceylon Hill Stations," and surrounded by hills tinted green by the seemingly limitless rows of tea bushes, a hundred airmen are regaining vigour and sense of liveliness dulled by the jungle and the humid coasts of Ceylon.

More than two years have passed since the Royal Air Force decided to establish a hill station among the highlands of Ceylon. Someone suggested the clubhouse of the Dimbula Cricket and Athletic Club at Radella and the members, most of whom are engaged in tea planting, soon denoted their willingness to do all possible to make the establishment of such a centre a success.

In July 1942 the first twenty-five airmen were being accommodated in the clubhouse; by the end of the year the scheme had been so successful that accommodation for a hundred had been provided.

Today, there are three large huts for sleeping quarters and a spacious dining room, while the clubhouse serves solely for recreational purposes. The large





*In the airmen's bar at Radella*

room, complete with fireplace and log fires, has a stage which is generally ascribed to be the best on the island and tonight, as I write, rehearsals for a concert to be produced in the very near future are in full swing.

The heat was terrific when I left Colombo yesterday morning. It rained hard as we climbed the pass to Kandy. A thousand feet up it was still uncomfortably warm and even Ceylon's old capital was oppressive. Over the hills to Nuwara Eliya we ran into more rain, and thick mists draped the 7,000 feet summit of the pass. But in Nuwara Eliya there was a piercingly cold wind and we were glad to sit beside a log fire in the hotel and sip cups of hot tea.

The final stage of the run into Radella showed us cloud-curtained hillsides, dripping foliage and a rushing brown river pouring through a green ravine.

Without the slightest doubt, the scenery about the place is magnificent but neither last evening nor today have provided the type of weather suitable for enjoying scenery. One can well imagine how disgruntled we would have been had we gone to the Highlands of Scotland or

the English Lake District and found similar conditions predominating.

Yet there has been no complaining at Radella. Instead, we have relished the cold rain and the mists. For weeks we have felt the naked power of the sun and run the gauntlet of the malarial mosquito, of dengue fever and prickly heat. We have longed for cool breezes and looked forward to a time when we could venture out of doors without trying to take advantage of every yard of shade. Now we have left those things behind for a while, neither rain nor mist seem unpleasant.

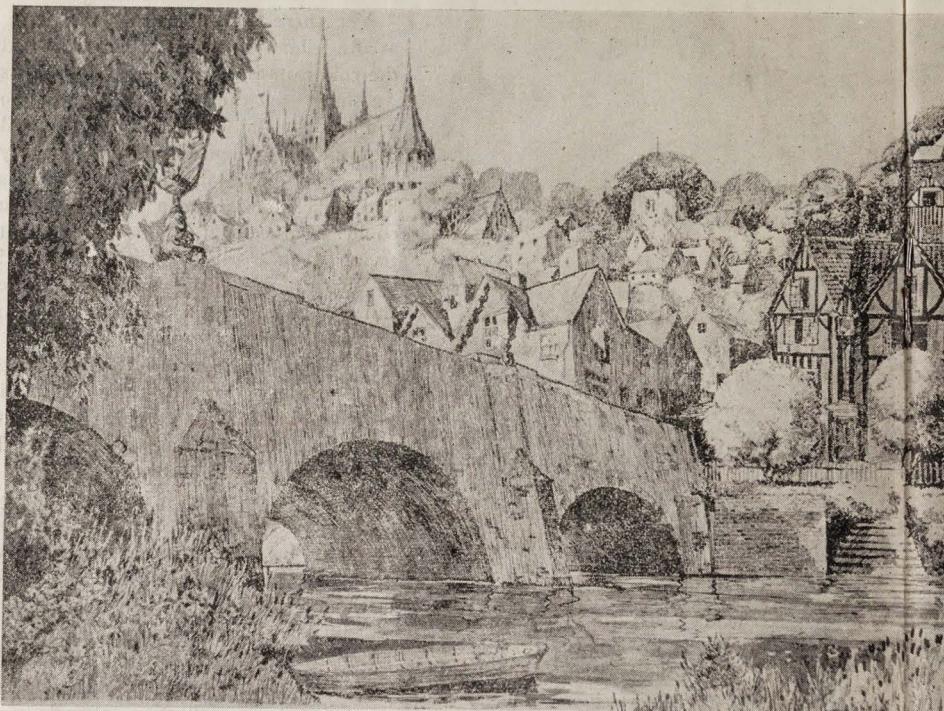
As I walked down the winding lane leading towards the camp I passed a local laddie carrying a basket crammed full of flowers. Perhaps I looked amazed at this, for the Commanding Officer's wife—who is mainly responsible for the creature comforts of "guests" (as the airmen "temporarily attached" may well call themselves)—explained to me that these were being sent by one of the neighbouring planters. Evidently these people are determined that the dining room should never be without its collection of colourful blooms.

A little later I was shown a collection of fresh vegetables and fruits. "Another gift from one of our planter friends," was the explanation. But there was much more in it than that. After a deal of questioning I found that this particular planter had dug up his lawns and private golf course and converted them into a huge vegetable garden. All his produce is GIVEN to the R. A. F. Yet another example of the generosity of the Ceylon planters.

"Radella Pork" is a feature of the menu. A small farm has been established on the camp and home fattened pigs go to help out the

*(Continued on page 18)*

# ARTISTS IN UNIFORM-II.



(Top Left) "The River Arun at Arundel", by Cpl. Keith Watson.

(Bottom Left) "English Village", by Cpl. Keith Watson.

(Top Right) "A Berkshire Lane", by Cpl. Keith Watson.

(Near Right) "Purdah Market in Agra Fort", by Sgt. Colston Waite.

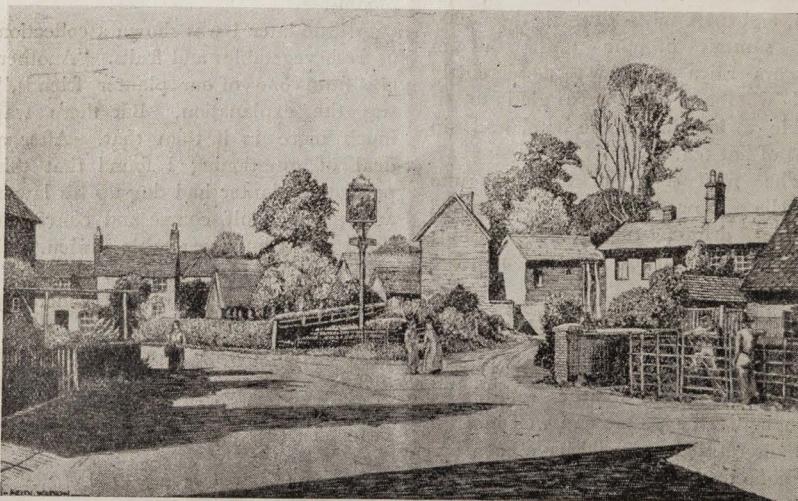
(Far Right) "Sikhs Temple, near Delhi", by Sgt. Colston Waite.

IN Issue No. 12 of the "Journal" we illustrated the work of "Artists In Uniform" in oils and water colours. Now it is turn of those whose medium is pen and ink.

Of the drawings shown here, the studies of English scenes by Cpl. Keith Watson are noteworthy for two reasons—they are executed in one case ("River Arun") entirely from memory and in the other cases from rough

sketch-book notes; and they are in complete contrast to his well-known humorous drawings, e. g., "Charteris" and the General, that have long been a feature of the Journal.

Sgt. Colston Waite, the other artist whose work appears here, combines drawing as a hobby with singing. Listeners to the troops' broadcasts from A. I. R. will have heard his fine baritone voice on many occasions.



ordinary meat ration. There are poultry and turkeys, too, as well as a whole host of rabbits. Fresh meat, as well as fresh vegetables, are attractions at Radella, and come as a treat to palates wearied of canned beef and dehydrated potatoes.

It was raining when I met the man with the flowers; it was raining when I looked at the store of vegetables and visited the farm, and it was still raining when four airmen passed me with golf clubs in their hands. Oh yes; Radella has its own golf course and many a Scotsman has found unexpected pleasure in introducing some Sassenach or Canadian to his homeland sport.

A strange kind of holiday this. There are no promenades to stroll upon, no crowds and no so-called amusement parks. Even the cinema is seven miles away! Yet we're enjoying ourselves. There are such games as football and softball, as well as golf, to play; there is a billiards table on which some 20,000 "sorties" have been played without its having to be re-covered; there is a collection of magazines and books, and, most popular of all, there is a ration of one bottle of beer per man every other night.

Today I caught sight of the train that

### Our American Allies



*"And who does that—er—contraption belong to? The one marked with the—er—asterisk....."*

goes down from this roof of Ceylon to the coast at Colombo, down to the humidity and the heat. I watched it disappear . . . and I was thankful that I had come to a land far away from the world of whirling fans and sweating bodies.

### BY AN AIRMAN

IT was with open rejoicings that our little party of four collected our papers from Headquarters and jeopardising lives and luggage went by tonga to the railway station. Here two hastened to find the train and more important, a carriage able to take us, and two struggled with the multitudinous chitties of the Booking Office. Eventually our boxes, ourselves and nearly a dozen other Service travellers were scientifically packed in the carriage and the train drew away from the station.

A hot, but otherwise eventless ride brought us to the Junction where we alighted and waited for our connection. Here, we were surprised to find a Troops' Canteen which served free 'char, sans doodh' (and if that isn't good attempt at an international language I'm a Jap jeep!) The char, tea or what-have-you, was very welcome nevertheless and passed the time until dinner was ready, this being a good five-course meal. Point of interest in the restaurant was the air cooling plant—one hand-driven punkha; the only enviable point of the punkha-wallah's job being the receipt of occasional backsheesh.

Our train was due in about an hour, so we thought we had better confirm our reservation. We were not really surprised to find that this was just an Indian Mirage, the train having left the terminus full and the coaches being added here being obviously inadequate.

By various means accommodation was found for all, two of our party being fortunate in securing first Class accommodation, while the other two travelled as BOR's should. My friend shared a compartment with some officers and he informed me that he did very well with the 'What will you have, Corporal?' monologue. My travelling companions were not so human, two of them; (of the species male and female!) addressed only three cryptic phrases to me during the whole of the 14 hours' journey. I have never felt so much like the Invisible Man before. "She" was a bad sleeper and woke many times during the night putting on the light each time disturbing my innocent slumbers. This, however, had one advantage for I was able to see a place to which my parents once thought of coming way back before the twentysixth crisis but one before Munich. It occurred to me that had I been born out here I should have been a real bara-sahib (Wuh bagh, kahan hai ?!) Miles, chhota meals and innumerable mugs of char sped by and at last we were at our destination or rather, the rail-head.

Much to do here, queuing for signing in, for the buses, and finally badgering the Indian driver to jaldi-jao, get moving. We only waited a mere three hours before deciding to leave for our real destination, a home in the hills. What a ride that was ! With twisting, daring, speedy turns the bus fled up the slopes at full speed, while the road spun and gyrated before our eyes. Mountains and valleys, and whole kaleidoscope of beauty raced round us as up and up we went. We reached the 6,000 ft. above sea-level mark and still chased on. Buses that had left before us were now well behind us and we thought of the Swiss Alps, of the Bridgwater Flats,

of the Red Sea, and clung on hopefully. A brief pause at the toll gate—one rupee please—a few hundred yards further climb, and we were safely at the top. No sooner had the 'bus safely 'docked' when it was besieged' by numerous coolies, fighting for possession of a tin box or a bag that meant a potential four annas.

Amidst the welter of activity, we had a quick look at the scene; saw a placid lake set in a bowl of hills, while at the far end towered the obvious guardian of the valley, a proud 9,000 ft. mountain. This was to be our home for a brief twelve days and what a home ! Was there indeed beauty so fair anywhere?

#### WE HAD ARRIVED—CAN YOU GUESS WHERE ????

(Continued from page 13)

The situation of married airmen without children is different. The Government contribution to the allowances of childless wives has not been increased. Nevertheless, the new scale of qualifying allotment is being applied to airmen with childless wives, not only to bring the R. A. F. more closely into line with the other Services, but also because it is administratively impracticable to operate a system under which the rate of qualifying allotment varies according to whether an airman has or has not got any children. The effect of the increase in the rate of qualifying allotment is to place the airman and his wife in broadly the same position as the sailor or soldier and his wife. Although it does not affect the total of the amounts received by the airman and his wife, the airman receives less, and his wife receives more than before.

If an airman has been making a voluntary allotment, it is, of course, open to him to reduce or discontinue it now that the qualifying allotment has been increased.

OPINION

WHAT we do in the Pacific after this war is far more important than what we do in Europe. In Europe the peoples, the populations, the cultural traits, the psychological attitudes, are well frozen. They are set; they are solidified. In Europe after the war there will be more socialism or less, more nationalism or less; a boundary will be drawn here instead of there. There will be no great population increases; migrations of people will be numbered in the millions, not the hundreds of millions; scientific advances will continue, but it will not come as a great jolt, because Europe has been accustomed to more than 100 years of scientific advancement.

Asia, on the other hand, is about to take a great leap across the centuries, from medievalism to modernity. The whole character of Asia's people, their attitudes, their psychology, is about to change. Asia will be moving from the hand loom into the age of plastics, without ever going through the conditioning experience of the early Industrial Revolution. As education and scientific knowledge spread, the Pacific peoples will be moving from rickshaws to electronics.

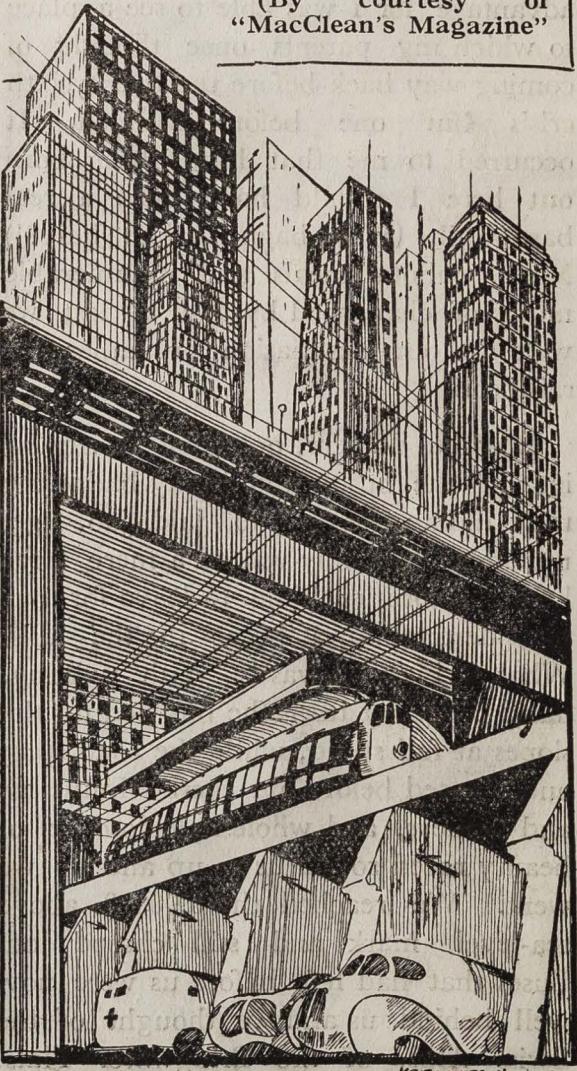
Then, too, there will be some startling population changes in the next 20 to 40 years. The population of this planet is roughly two billion, of which approximately one billion live in Asia, excluding Asiatic Russia. In the 10-year period between 1940 and 1950, and including all the deaths from war, famine and flood, India will have added around 30,000,000 to her population, and China will have added around 40,000,000.

## LAST CHANCE IN ASIA

by the Hon. Will Rogers, Jr.

A member of the Foreign Affairs Committee of the U.S. House of Representatives, Will Rogers, Jr. is one of the young American politicians for whom a big future is predicted. The ideas expressed in this article are, of course, his own personal views and are not official in any way.

(By courtesy of  
"MacClean's Magazine")



Population curves in most European countries and in the United States and Canada have started slowly to level off. A higher percentage of the people are moving into the older age groups. As Prime Minister Churchill said in a world-wide broadcast, England may be looking forward to a period of population decline.

But in Asia there is no such trend. In the last 60 years the population of Asia has doubled. Even more important, the rate of increase has been going up each year. As proper medical care becomes more prevalent, and as the growing and distribution of food becomes more efficient, the rate of Asiatic increase may continue to rise for another generation or so. The only Asiatic nation that shows any indication of levelling off is Japan, and it will not be levelling off for another 50 years or so.

The changes in Europe after this war will be minute compared to those in

Asia and the Pacific and I am afraid that the western Nations are not prepared, nor are they preparing, for such tremendous changes as will occur.

The Orient and Pacific are still malleable. Their patterns and forms are still fluid. It is our actions after this war that will give the Orient the mould in which it will harden.

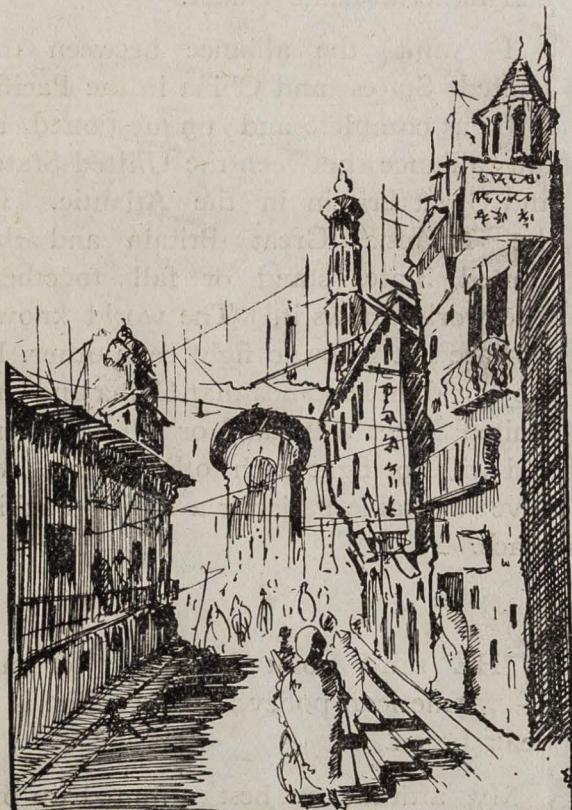
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**T**O discuss policy in the Pacific we must start with a few assumptions. First we have to assume that the Japanese war will be won. That, I believe, is a safe assumption.

Then we have to assume that the United States will participate in Pacific affairs, with sufficient energy and tenacity to carry out a policy. That assumption is not quite so sure.

Thirdly, we have to assume that co-operation between the four key powers: Russia, the United States, China and Great Britain is possible. That assumption is the most shaky of all. Some people say that the differences between a Soviet system and a capitalist system are so great that no co-operation between them is possible. I don't believe that. Some people say that the empires in the Pacific are so important to the home countries that the home countries cannot afford to stop exploiting them. I don't believe that. Some people say that America's desires in the Pacific and China's desires in the Pacific are so mutually antagonistic that they cannot be reconciled. I don't believe that.

I believe that while the United States idea on the Pacific might differ from the Chinese, which may differ from the Russian, nevertheless, Pacific co-operation is so obviously essential to peace that these differing desires can be worked out. It will be difficult, but not impossible.



With this view of Asia as a great ferment—a great wild yeast, ready to startle the world with the rapidity and direction of its growth—and with the assumption that peace is possible, I suggest that a United States foreign policy in the Pacific should incorporate, among others, these five points:

\* \* \*

**T**HE first point, and the most important, is that the United States and the United Nations should issue a declaration embodying the principle of equality for all races and peoples.

This does not mean that any nation will have to change its immigration quotas. It does not interfere with the internal affairs, or sovereignty, of any nation. But it does mean that we announce that one of the aims, one of the goals, one of the ideals toward which we struggle, is the principle of equality of races.

This idea of a declaration on equality of races is nothing new. It is in the United States Constitution and the Declaration of Independence. In principle, it is written in most of the laws of most of the Democracies of the world. It is implied in the doctrine of the Four Freedoms, for which we say we fight.

The United Nations have issued enough high-sounding phrases, and the United States is always exchanging platitudes and compliments with other countries. I do not see why a statement embodying the principle of the equality of all races could not be issued. Race tensions do exist, but if we are to have a stable world order we must work to diminish them.

\* \* \*

**M**Y second point is that the United States should work for a strong, unified China.

I want that to be the base policy in Asia: to restore to China its ancient position as the unquestioned leader in its part of the world. That necessitates a change in both Britain's and America's past policy. For previously neither country has spent too much effort in helping China become strong. Many people are afraid of a strong China. In general they are the people who want to maintain a "balance of power" in the Pacific.

In my opinion such a policy would be disastrous. It would lead to insecurity, conflict and war. I am not in sympathy with the old-fashioned, predatory industrialist who wants to keep China weak for exploitative purposes. Nor do I fear a strong China as an economic competitor. A strong China is an economic asset. Half a billion paupers are no good as customers. But half a billion people starting to use radios and transparent plastic tooth-brushes become a possibility for trade and material achievement.

I want the alliance between the United States and China in the Pacific to be as complete and unquestioned as the alliance between the United States and Great Britain in the Atlantic. In the Atlantic Great Britain and the United States stand or fall together. The world knows it. The world knows we are not going to fight each other. If the world understands that China and the United States will stand or fall together, and will not fight each other, then we have a stable basis for a lasting Pacific peace.

\* \* \*

**T**HE third point I suggest for an American policy in the Pacific is a weak Japan.

My attitude is best summed up by

the remarks of a radio commentator. He was asked what to do about keeping down post-war Japan. The answer was, "Well, I haven't heard very much news from Carthage lately."

I want U.S. Pacific policy to be crystal-clear: strong China, weak Japan.

To keep Japan from becoming a military menace in the Pacific is not going to be as difficult as some people think. Here is what I think is a very sensible suggestion. It is simple and direct. For 15 years put Japan on probation. During that period Japan will not be allowed to have any merchant marine. Japan may maintain some small fishing boats and a few inter-island steamers of small tonnage. But that is all. Japan can neither build, own, nor man any merchant freighter or passenger ship. For 15 years the only way a Japanese can go to sea is as a passenger on someone else's ship.

The elimination of Japan as a maritime power will not bring about the hardships that most people suppose. Japan is almost self-supporting. She imports only 10 to 12% of her food, and most of that is Korean rice. Japan, if she put the energy and technique which she has squandered in making armaments into the production of food-stuffs, could be self-sufficient.

The startling fact of Japanese economy, and the thing which has made Japan appear so subservient to foreign trade, is that the ruling class of Japan has never made any effort to develop the home market. They kept the standard of living incredibly low so that they could export goods, and in turn buy machine tools, oil and scrap iron. Once the Japanese economy is freed of the burden of armaments, Japan can become self-sufficient and with a higher standard of living than she has enjoyed

during the war. I think we can be quite ruthless with the shipping, armament factories and foreign trade of Japan, because I believe that they have not helped raise the standard of the Japanese people, but only the standard of Japanese armaments.

Taking away all her ships does not mean that we withdraw and leave Japan to her own internal devices. By no means. We must set Japan on the path toward democracy and international co-operation.

\* \* \*

**M**Y fourth suggestion is that when quarrels arise between the Imperial Powers and their colonies in the Pacific, the United States should not take the side of the Imperial Powers.

Asia will be in a great ferment after this war. Peoples who heretofore were content to stand aside in docility from now on will start demanding participation in business and government. All the ancient errors of colonial administration will be pointed out and the corrections made by the newly returned colonial administrators will be howled at as insufficient and insincere.

We may rest assured that the Japanese, with their cry of "Asia for the Asiatics," will not have made the lot of the returning colonial administrators any easier.

One thing we can look for is the start of nationalism—a disease which heretofore has not plagued that area. Another is that the colonial powers are going to find it increasingly difficult to maintain a foothold on the continental mainland of Asia. Those colonies which are on the mainland, India, Burma, the Malay States and French Indo-China, are precisely those in which there has been, and probably will continue to be, the most trouble.

Because of rising nationalism, and because of the upheavals created by Japan, few, if any, of the colonies are going to be satisfied with their pre-war status.

Unless some unforeseen correction is applied I think colonial troubles in the Pacific are inevitable. They will start as soon as the United Nations begin retaking heavily populated areas, and they will continue for years.

During these agitations and in these conflicts I do not want the United States ever to take the part of a colonial power. The United States has to live in the Pacific and none of the other colonial powers do. The U. S. has an excellent reputation. I do not want to spoil it. It is far more important to the future of the United States to have the good-will of the peoples of the Pacific than it is to have the good-will of the empires in the Pacific.

\* \* \*

MY fifth suggestion is brief. Hawaii should become a State of the Union—the 49th State—and the United States should take over the Japanese mandated islands, and the Bonin Islands. The people of Hawaii have certainly earned statehood. They should become an integral part of the Union.

I believe almost everyone is agreed that the United States should take over the Japanese mandated islands. I think Australia and New Zealand would welcome the United States into the Japanese mandated group because what they want is the security which the United States could give them.

If the U.S. takes over those and the Bonin Islands, and the Chinese take over Formosa and the Riu-Kiu group

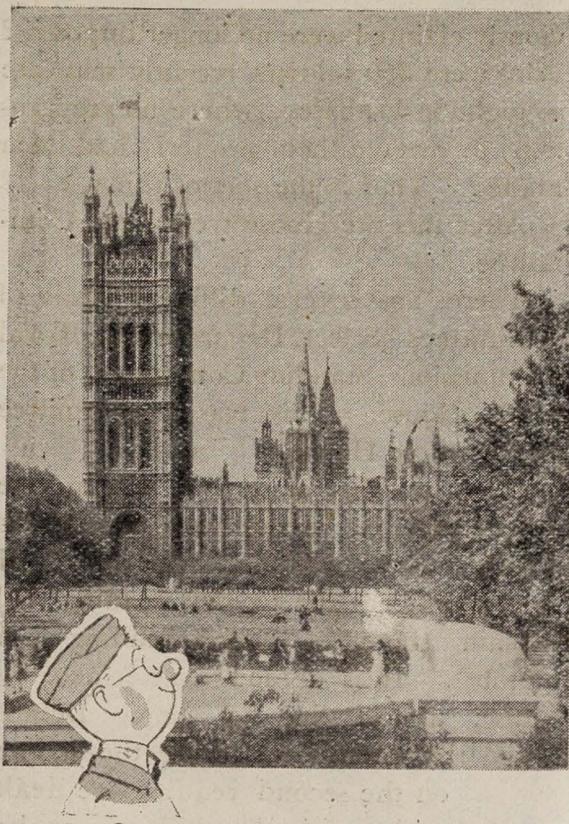
of Islands, as guaranteed to them by the Cairo Conference, and if the Russians should take over all of Sakhalin and some of the northern Kurile Islands Japan will be left pretty well defenceless—and at the same time we shall be removing practically none of our economic assets.

When the U.S. takes over the mandated and the Bonin Islands it must make their political position absolutely clear. The native population of the mandated islands is roughly 120,000; that of the Bonin Islands 5,000. The Japanese on those Islands should be returned to Japan. The natives should become United States citizens, with full rights. It should be announced that these islands are not colonies. These islands are bases. They should be under naval administration, the same as Guam was before the war.

These are my suggestions of some of the points that a United States policy in the Pacific should embrace.

We—that is the United States, Canada, Australia, New Zealand, all of the South American countries fronting on the Pacific—will have a fearful responsibility after this war. We must give indication to the newly developing peoples of Asia that we genuinely want to co-operate with them. We must work to relieve racial tensions; we must refrain from playing Oriental politics by pushing one nation against another; we must work to relieve colonial tensions, and we must attempt some overall scheme of security.

In the Pacific the age of domination is gone, and the time for co-operation is here. I am afraid that if in the next 20 years we do not set up a friendly Pacific basis we shall not have another chance to do so for a long time to come.



# A SERVICEMAN LOOKS AT WAR-TIME PARLIAMENT

Sometimes described as "the most exclusive club in the world", the writer prefers to call the House of Commons "a workshop".

THE House of Commons was due to assemble at eleven o'clock, so a minute or two before that hour we stood in the central hall and watched the Speaker's procession.

The procession walked across the hall and into the chamber: it was the least fussy procession you ever saw. Yet impressive, when you think that this has been going on for centuries—the office of Speaker dates back to 1398—and when you think that the leading party of the day is always able to produce a man capable of putting the larger interests of the House before the intenser interests of his party.

The Speaker is the "mouth of the House." He enforces observance of the rules for preserving order. He has very great authority—the symbol of which is the mace. He also has very great prestige.

The House always starts with prayers. The public is not admitted until the day's business, which begins with Ques-

tion time. We climbed up into the Visitors' Gallery.

I had not previously been in Parliament since before the war and was curious to see how it had changed. The main change is that since their chamber was destroyed in the Blitz, Commons now meets in the chamber formerly used by the Lords. The Visitors' Gallery in the Lords is not the best place to view the proceedings. Parliament, however, is not really a spectacle. You can get a very misleading impression of the place from an hour in the Visitors' Gallery.

In other respects the new chamber is probably an improvement on the old. The lighting is good, and the seats, upholstered in a reddish coloured leather, are easier to sit upon. Amplifiers help you to hear what is going on. In general, however, there is the same deceptive air about everything. Members walk about casually and appear inattentive, or they sit whispering to

gether, paying small attention to the answers to questions, which are rattled off at a great speed.

All this, I say, is largely deceptive. Question time is a profoundly important part of our parliamentary system. Heads of departments fear these questions as they fear nothing else. Questions, of which two days' notice are given, are printed on Order Papers, and heads of departments go through them with a fine tooth comb, as it were; for if anything goes wrong with their departments it is pretty certain to rebound on them in the form of a question.

If the answer is unsatisfactory there is a supplementary question, and if there appears to be anything seriously wrong with the answer to this, a Member may move to adjourn the House at the end of the day and have the matter thrashed out in debate.

There is a technique in asking questions. They are often framed in general terms so that the Minister cannot fortify himself in advance. The real point of the question will then come out in the form of a supplementary question, in which the Member reveals, with chapter and verse, some particular cause of dissatisfaction.

Ministers rarely attempt to condone anything unsatisfactory. On the contrary they try to find out what is really wrong, and set it right, before they are called upon to answer the question. Members know this. They can afford their rather casual attitude. It is the attitude of people conscious of their real power.

The day I was there produced 107 questions. Why was a soldier, undergoing detention in a military barracks, made to double round a square in conditions which the Minister had pre-

viously claimed were no longer imposed? Why were 350 soldiers recently sent late at night to Wallasey, where no preparations to receive them properly had been made? That is the sort of thing.

After this the House went "into Committee."

There are several different kinds of committees—Select, Departmental, Royal Commissions, Standing Committees of the whole House. This was a committee of the whole House.

It is at this stage—the Committee Stage—that the detail work of a Bill is carried out, after having been approved in principle at the second reading (I'll explain about the second reading in a minute). It is argued over clause by clause, almost line by line. Details raised by Members during the debate on the second reading are dealt with, and the Bill may be amended on points of detail, though not of principle. The Committee remains in the chamber, which is still open to the public. Debates are a very different matter. They are the high spots of parliamentary life. Debates arise in three

different ways. Firstly they may arise on the adjournment—I explained how a Member, dissatisfied at Question time, may move to adjourn, if the answer he gets is unsatisfactory and the matter sufficiently serious to justify a debate. Secondly debates arise on motions criticizing, or approving, the policy of the Government. Lastly debates take place on Bills put forward by the Government: this is the most common reason for a Debate.

#### How does a Bill become law?

In the beginning the Bill is laid on the table of the House. This is called the First Reading, though in point of fact the Bill isn't read at all. Indeed, it some-



times isn't a Bill, either, being only a dummy to conform to the practice of formally presenting a Bill to the House. As soon as the Bill is drafted copies are printed and given to each Member in time for the Second Reading.

It is on the Second Reading that the debate takes place. Here again the Bill isn't actually read to the Members—the Bill never is read to the Members, who have, of course, read it on being given their printed copies.

The debate is opened by the Minister of the department concerned, who explains the objects and principles of the Bill. When he has finished the Bill is then attacked, defended, deplored, applauded, and generally subjected to acutest criticism on the one hand and devoutest support on the other. This goes on for the rest of the day, or even two or more days. Finally a Minister ends the debate by trying to answer the various points raised, and if the opposition is still dissatisfied they force a division.

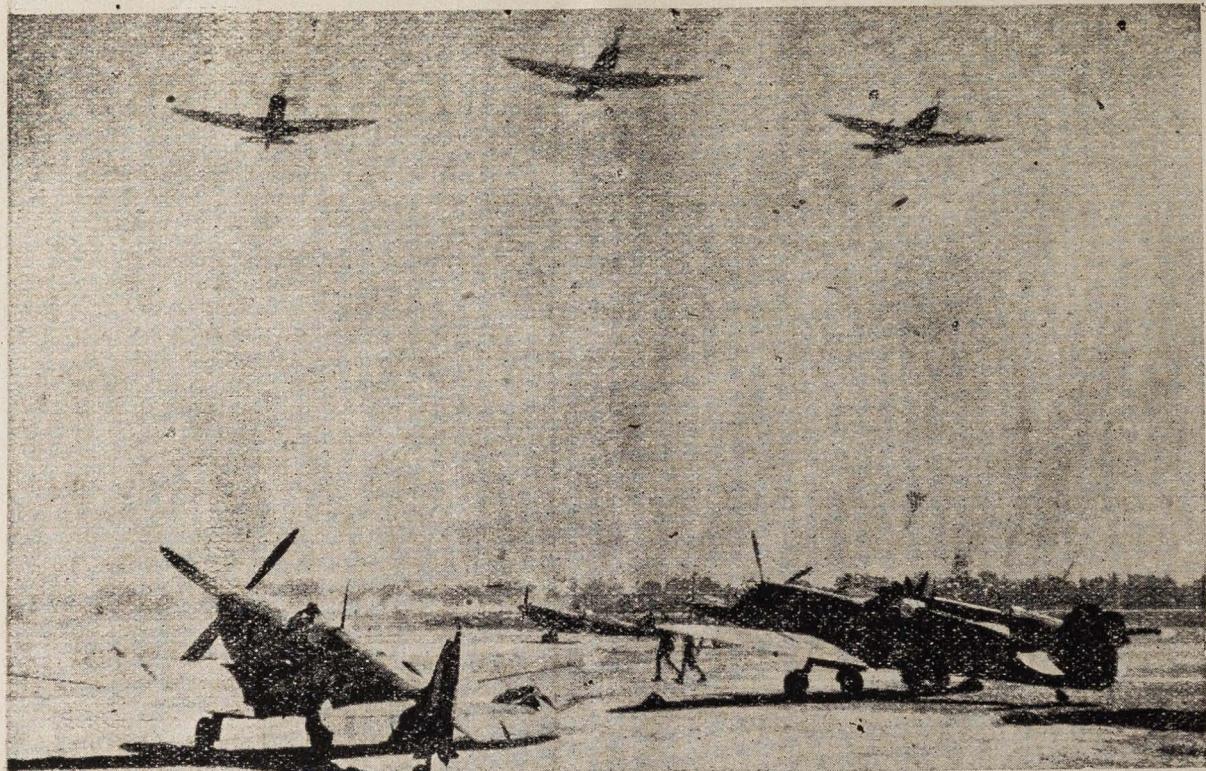
There is a Division Lobby on each side of the House. The 'ayes' go to the right and the 'noes' to the left, and the Bill is either carried, or defeated,—accordingly. If the Bill is defeated the Government falls. If the Bill is carried it then goes into the Committee Stage, where it is thrashed out in detail. Thus concluded it goes back before the full House for the report stage and third reading.

So far as the Commons is concerned that is the end of it. The Bill now goes before the Lords. If it gets through the Lords it goes to the King for the Royal Assent. How long does all this take? Two months, three months; perhaps more, perhaps less. Too long? Urgency can speed up the process. The Emergency Powers (Defence) Act, 1939, got through all the Commons stages in half an hour. The next day it was law.

## QUIZ ANSWERS

1. A barracuda is a large W. Indian sea fish, not unlike a very large pike. It is particularly vicious.
2. Royal Maundy is so-called because by custom it is on Maundy Thursday that money is distributed to as many men and women as the King's years—in 1944, 49 of each sex. In 1932 King George V revived the custom of bestowing the Royal Maundy in person, and since that date personal distribution has taken place every fourth year. In other years the Lord High Almoner (now Archbishop Lord Lang) is responsible for the distribution.
3. Two.
4. The new pre-fabricated pressed steel houses for post-war temporary homes.
5. International Labour Organization; also used for International Labour Office, which is part of the Organization.
6. Major-General W. D. A. Lentaigne.
7. (a) Adolf Hitler; (b) Karl Marx; (c) Leo Tolstoy.
8. (a) The fortress castle of Moorish Kings at Granada, Spain; (b) A temple on the Acropolis at Athens, Greece; (c) A white marble mausoleum built by the Mogul Emperor Shah Jehan (1628-58) in memory of his favourite wife, at Agra.
9. (a) China; (b) Belgium; (c) Russia.
10. 48.
11. Washington, which is not in any State, but in the District of Columbia.  
Yes. He yields the whole executive authority and is Commander-in-Chief of all the armed forces, although only Congress can formally declare war or ratify a foreign treaty.
13. The Red Indians; all the rest are immigrants.
14. The Atlantic coast of America was occupied by English settlers at Jamestown in 1607. The Pilgrim Fathers landed in 1620.

# SPITFIRES OVER BURMA



TO those of us who can recall the last pre-monsoon, the first six months of 1944 will always be remembered as those in which the Spitfire enhanced the reputations gained on other fronts of the war and provided our pilots with a machine which was more than a match for the much vaunted Japanese fighters.

Few secrets were better kept than that concerning the arrival of these fighters on the Arakan Front. Throughout the weeks between the closing of the monsoon and the opening of the Fourteenth Army's offensive from Bawdi Bazar they moved forward from the Calcutta area and were to be seen circling about the East Bengal skies. Yet their presence was not broadcast at large. It was intended that the Japanese should have something more than a mere announcement with which to mark the debut of Spitfires on the Arakan front.

There was, of course, a great desire

to see just what would be the result of the first encounter between the great British fighter and the Japanese machines.

The first real clash took place on Boxing Day last. A strong force of enemy bombers, with fighter escort, attempted a raid on Chittagong, a town which had so often been the target of their attacks. It was a different sort of raid to any which preceded it! The Spitfires brought off an interception south of the town and in the many air battles that took place the Japs got the worst of the encounters. Just what the Japanese airmen thought of the Spitfires is not known, but in this, the first big raid since the arrival of these fighters in East Bengal, several enemy aircraft were destroyed or damaged without loss to ourselves.

The first test was over, and there had been no doubt as to the result.

A few days later—New Year's

Famous fighter enhances its reputation in Burma front battles.

by Flight Lieutenant S.M. Lyndale

Eve—the Japanese again sent over a force of aircraft towards Chittagong and once more Spitfires brought off an interception to the south of the town. The battle which ensued proved even more disastrous for the raiders than that of Boxing Day had been, for this time no fewer than thirteen Japs aircraft were definitely destroyed, and nearly as many probably destroyed or damaged. Indeed, this one battle resulted in the virtual wiping out of the whole of the enemy formation.

For the second time within a week, here was unimpeachable evidence of the supremacy of the Spitfire. In the Battle of Britain and in the aerial combats over the Western Desert of Africa and Sicily the Spitfire had proved its capabilities against the best machines the Nazis and Fascists could put in the air. It had now won a new honour on another front, for this New Year's Eve victory was undoubtedly the outstanding success of any fighter squadron in the Burmese theatre of war since the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbour had extended the conflict to the East.

These two clashes, however, did more than show that the Spitfire was more than a match for the Japanese fighters. They afforded a basis for comparison between the British machine and those used by the enemy. There was no doubting that the Japanese aircraft designers had brought out machines possessing a very high degree of manoeuvrability in the air, but it was early evident that this quality had only been achieved at the expense of at least three important qualities—speed,

strength and armament. Lightness of construction was one of their chief qualities and protective armour plating was reduced to an absolute minimum. That, as one Spitfire pilot pointed out, was why "when you hit a Japanese fighter you almost invariably get him."

The Spitfire, on the other hand made up for its deficiency so far as manoeuvrability was concerned by a superiority in speed, rate of climb, strength and fire power.

The advance of the Fourteenth Army had its repercussions on the Spitfire squadrons and as the front line extended deeper into Japanese-held Burma so were they moved forward to occupy forward airfields. This meant that they were there to deal with Japanese fighter sweeps and to intercept hostile raids long before the main supply bases further back were threatened.

Japanese infiltration and the consequent period of the bloodiest fighting Arakan has seen—a succession of combats now grouped under the general heading of the Battle of Arakan—which extended throughout the greater part of February brought the Spitfire squadrons into action. Indeed, never a day passed without the pilots being in the air. At times taking on odds which weighed heavily against themselves, they never faltered and throughout the period their fighting spirit and morale were magnificent.

During the twenty-one days that the battle was at its height, Spitfire squadrons of the Third Tactical Air Force flew hundreds of sorties with one object in view. That was to maintain complete air dominance. Often pilots scrambled countless times during the course of a day and many a patrol

had only just concluded when the pilots again climbed into the air to do battle with the enemy.

Although the figures of seven definitely destroyed, seven more probably destroyed and fifty damaged during that period give some idea of the punishment meted out to the enemy by the Spitfire squadrons, they are not reflective of the real results of the battle. When Spitfires and Oscars are engaged in combat, the fights are so swift that pilots have little time to assess the final results of their attacks and it is quite obvious that a large proportion of the machines claimed as damaged were in reality destroyed. The fact that practically every battle ended with the Japs heading south for Akyab and the Spitfires giving chase is perhaps the truest reflection of the real nature of the fighting.

It must be remembered, too, that the Japanese air force fights in a vastly different way from that of our own. Few, if any, fighters were kept in the forward areas and even the airfields around Akyab were only used for refuelling purposes. The fighters were kept much further back and were only brought forward in the late afternoons in preparation for a raid next morning, an important fact indicative of the Jap's appreciation of our qualifications for ground strafing..

While the Spitfires squadrons were proving their worth on the Arakan, plans for using them in one of the greatest enterprises of the present war were being made at the Headquarters of the South East Asia Command. It is now a matter of history that in mid-March an Allied force was landed by air some two hundred miles behind Japanese lines and not only did they succeed in establishing themselves but they also built landing strips in order

that aircraft could continue to bring the supplies and equipment necessary to maintain such an expedition.

Spitfires were brought to these strips for defensive purposes and when, eight days after the invading force had arrived, the Japanese discovered the presence of Allied airfields in their rear, the fighters were there to deal with the attackers. In the first fight, three Japanese aircraft were shot down and three more were probably destroyed. Co-operation between the pilots and the ground gunners reached a high standard, for when, in the dog fight which developed over one strip a Japanese fighter got on to a Spitfire's tail, he was promptly shot off by a burst of gun fire from the ground.

Once more the Japs had found the dreaded Spitfire operating in a place where they could least have expected to find opposition. Instead of being able to carry out an attack on vulnerable transport aircraft hundreds of miles inside their own territory and far beyond the protective arm of friendly fighters, they had found a whole squadron of Spitfires waiting to challenge them !

Only a few days after the airborne invasion of Burma by Allied forces, the Japanese patrols infiltrated across the Chindwin Hills into the Manipur State and soon forces of considerable strength began to threaten both Imphal and Kohima. It was a repetition of February's Arakan battle, but on a larger scale.

So the monsoon broke with the mastery of the skies still being hotly disputed. This time, however, there is no doubt as to who holds supremacy. Just as in the Battle of Britain, it was the Spitfire which broke down the offensive spirit of Goering's Luftwaffe, so did the arrival of these fighters on the Burmese front finally break down the myth of Japan's aerial invincibility.

# EMPIRE NEWS RECCE.



## A U S T R A L I A

THE "Southern Cross," the late Sir Charles Kingsford Smith's famous Fokker monoplane, may fly again.

Columbia Pictures propose to make a film on Kingsford Smith's life and the plane is needed for various purposes.

The Southern Cross was purchased by the Commonwealth Government as a national property and placed in the War Memorial Museum at Canberra in 1941.

An aeronautical engineer has examined the

machine and is of opinion that with minor adjustments it can be made airworthy.

If permission is granted by the Commonwealth Government it will be put into flying trim by the R.A.A.F. and photographed in flight for the film.

\* \* \*

It is announced that the R.A.A.F. Association intends to restore the late Captain Charles Ulm's plane "Faith in Australia" which is lying on a northern Australian airfield.

## S O U T H A F R I C A

PRACTICAL application of any policy of African cooperation lies in tackling problems such as communications, soil preservation, and health, which know no national boundaries.

Down from Kenya is soil expert Colin Maher, with a suggestion, not only for a conference of technicians, but also for those competent to deal with such matters as health and maximum

agricultural production.

Says Maher: "It's no good spending money on symptoms when basic reforms are needed, for the health, safety and prosperity of a large part of Africa are at stake."

Maher wants reorganisation of native agriculture, conservation of all arable land and of every drop of rain which can aid in growing crops.

If methods needed to achieve this are regarded as undemocratic, then, he argues that the enforcement of sanitation standards must also be regarded as an infringement of personal liberty.

Maher will find much support in the Union, where soil conservation is very much in the public mind.

\* \* \*

Due next month is Dr. H.H. Bennett, American wizard of the Dustbowl, whose advice on South

African remedial measures will be invaluable for saving the vital six inches of top soil.

First instalment of Govt. health planning will be establishment of 20 centres throughout the country with the motto 'prevention is better than cure.'

Provision will be made for all sections of the population, while staffing for the time being will be on temporary basis so that ex-volunteers can be considered on their return.

## CANADA

**R**ECRUITING for the R.C.A.F. has been suspended until October 1. Mr. C.G. Power, National Defence and Air Minister, announced this in Ottawa, and indicated that readjustments in the Commonwealth Air Training Plan, and the fact that the supply of fighter pilots is now in excess of requirements, enabled the air authorities to reduce their demands on the country's man-power.

\* \* \*

Another front is being consolidated in preparation for the air and sea attack on Japan.

This is the north-west staging route which connects Edmonton, potential Canadian junction point for world air traffic, with Alaska, on the short run to Japan across the Aleutian stepping-stones.

It is now revealed that the Edmonton-Alaska route comprises a chain of big landing fields via Fort St. John and Whitehorse.

Total cost of the project is about £12,000,000 but when the roads and airfields costs are combined, the outlay is £14,000,000.

Another million is being employed to extend the runways and make additions to airports in full readiness for the pressure movement against Japan.

\* \* \*

Drip from pipes on steamships, and wherever moisture gathers, has been stopped by a new anti-condensation paint discovered in Canada.

It contains processed mica and is non-inflammable.

## NEW ZEALAND

**R**EMARKABLE tribute to the war efforts of New Zealanders on the battle fronts and at home was paid by the former C-in-C of the South Pacific, Admiral F. Halsey, U.S.N., during a farewell visit to the Dominion.

"For 19 months now New Zealanders have been fighting under me, and if there are any better fighting men anywhere in the world I do not know where they are fighting," he said.

\* \* \*

With the object of decentralising control and expediting the granting of rehabilitation loans,

a scheme will be introduced in Auckland soon whereby applications by ex-servicemen will be dealt with on the spot.

The plan is to be in the nature of an experiment and, if successful, will be extended to the other three main centres.

\* \* \*

Eight years after work was first started, Timaru airport, it is claimed, is now fully ready for use and a general airliner licence may be issued in three months time by the Air Department.

# TARGET: LAUGHTER



The old man had lived all his life in one cottage; then he suddenly took it into his head to move next door. His puzzled friends asked why.

"Eh, well," he replied, "Aw reckon it's t' gipsy in me!"

\* \* \*

Aged listener, after the 9 o'clock news (peevishly): "I guessed *at once* who they meant by 'Bloodthirsty Gutter-snipe'; but who is this Offensive Sweep the B.B.C. is always talking about?"

\* \* \*

"No matter how busy or irritated you are," said the woman supervisor to a class of probationer telephone girls, "always be careful to tell a call-box subscriber to press button B if he is entitled to his money back. Never tell him to press the B button."

\* \* \*

Teacher: What do you understand by the word "deficit," John?

John: It's what you have got when you haven't as much as you had when you had nothing.

\* \* \*

Smith Minor Writes Home: "... We had veal for dinner today and the house-master calved." — *Punch*.

"Hullo!" said a voice "is that the R.S.P.C.A.?"

"Yes, madam!"

"Well, there's a nasty tramp sitting up in a tree in my garden teasing my dog!"

\* \* \* \*

"If you drink a lot of water" said the doctor "you'll never get stiff in the oints."

"But" complained the patient "some of the joints I go into don't serve water".

\* \* \* \*

## Howlers

Q. What do you understand by the Theory of Exchange?

A. The Theory of Exchange, as I understand it, is not very well understood.

A demagogue is a vessel containing base and other liquids.

An Eskimo is one of God's frozen people.

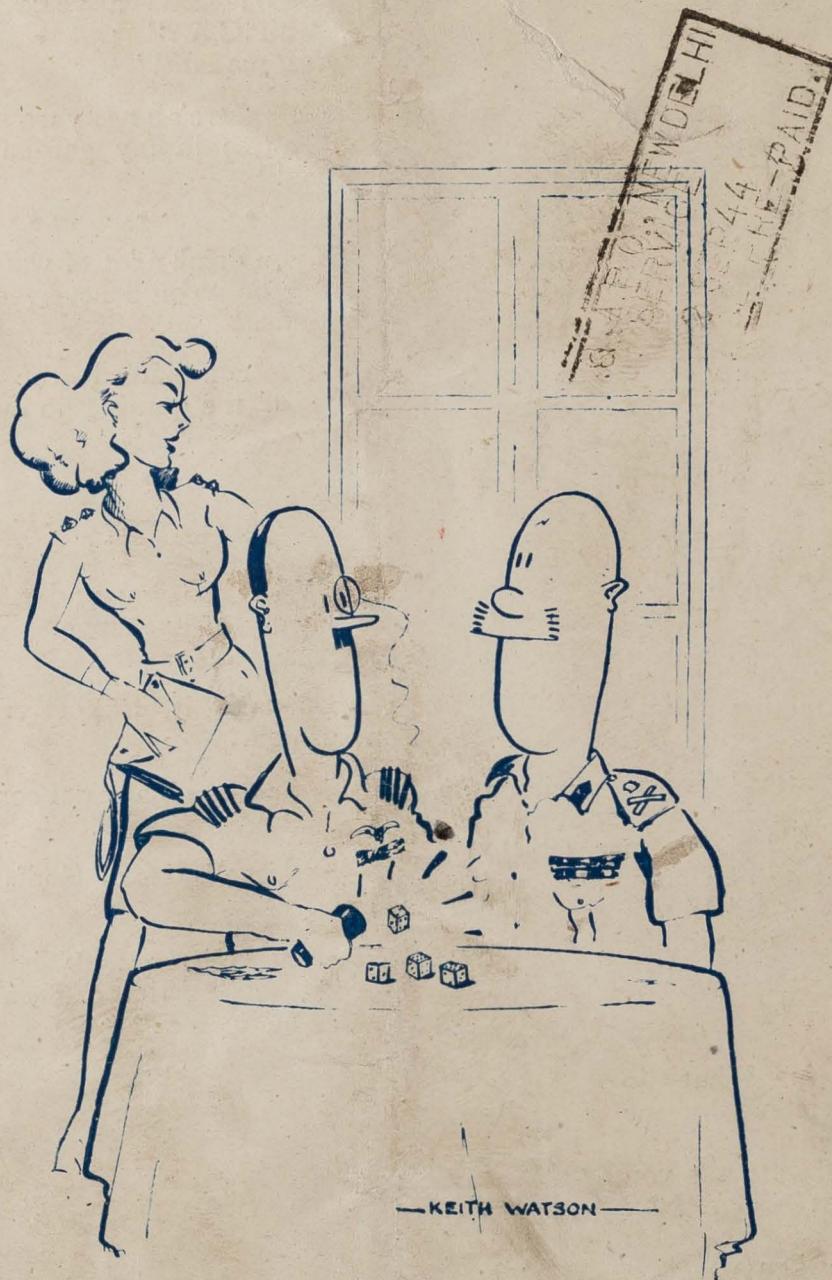
Natural History: "The Lesser Gas Bill is a bird that catches therm with its cubic feet."



"You can let go now."

# CARTOON

by Keith Watson



*"Oh, er,—Miss Adams, From now on you'll  
be working for the Group Captain."*